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ABSTRACT

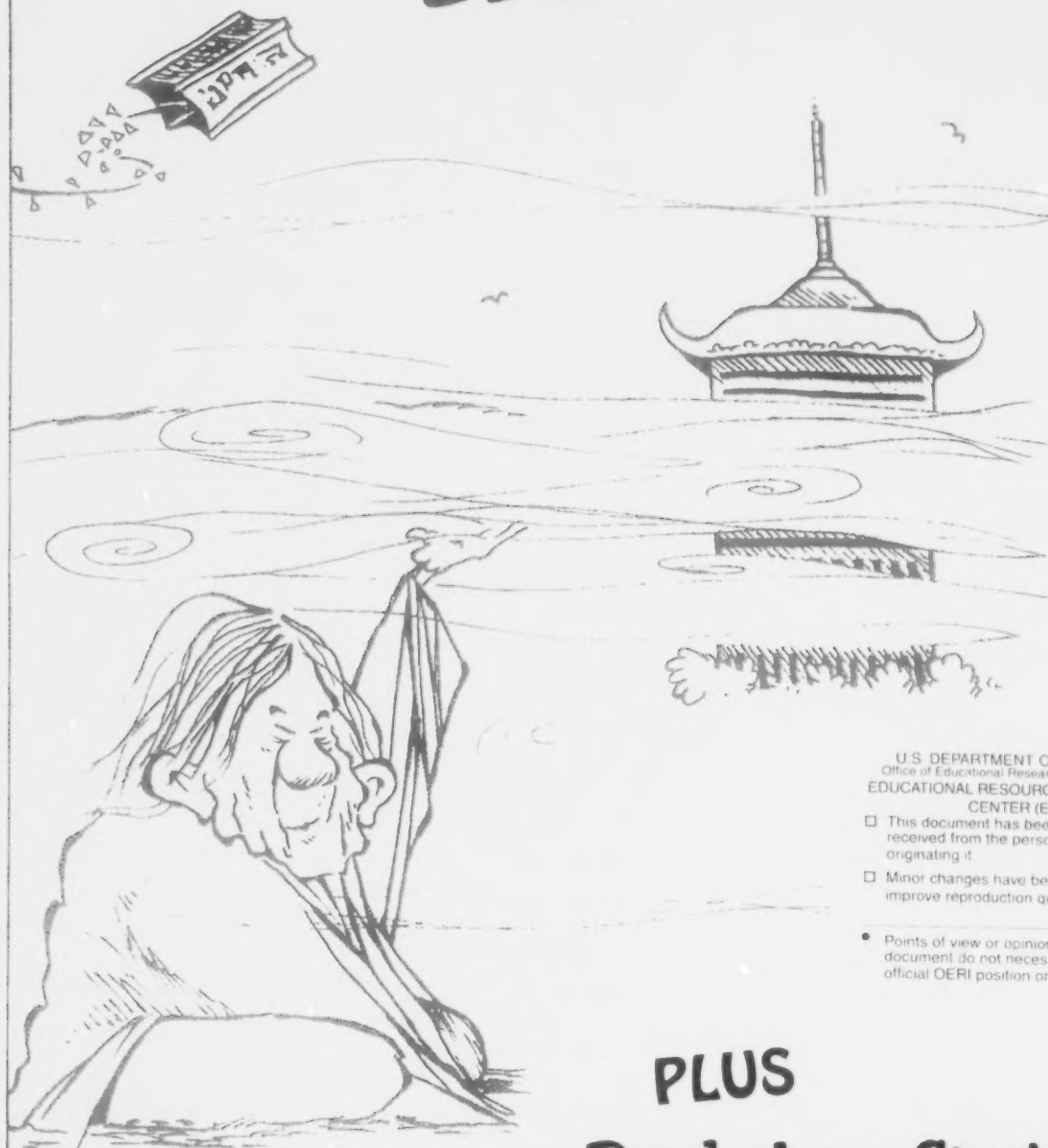
This book, one of a series, shares ideas on how parents can help children cope with and learn from tests. The message of the series urges parents and children to spend time together, talk about stories, and learn together. The first part of each book presents stories appropriate for varying grade levels, both younger children and those in grades three and four, and each book presents stories on a particular theme. The Read-along Stories in this book are: "The Burglar Alarm Case" (Ann Devendorf); "The Lunch Box" (Marilyn Kratz); and "The Girl Who Brought Down the Wind" (Constance Veatch Toney). On an accompanying audiotape, the stories are performed as radio dramas, allowing children to read along. The second half of each book provides ideas and guidelines for parents, as well as activities and books for additional reading. Sections in this book include: everyone can do better on tests; test anxiety; practice tests; and attitude and health. Activities to help children learn while having fun are also included. Contains 30 references. (EF)

Parents and Children Together SERIES

ED 452 535

SUCCESS WITH TEST-TAKING

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PLUS

Read-along Stories:

The Burglar Alarm Case

The Lunch Box

The Girl Who Brought Down the Wind

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CS 217 395

**Guidance and fun
for parents and children, ages 4–9**

This book has a companion audio tape also entitled “Success with Test Taking.” Occasionally there are directions on the tape that do not appear in the book or headings in the book that aren’t spoken on the tape.



Parents and Children Together SERIES

Published by **ERIC** Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication
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SUCCESS WITH TEST-TAKING

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Introduction

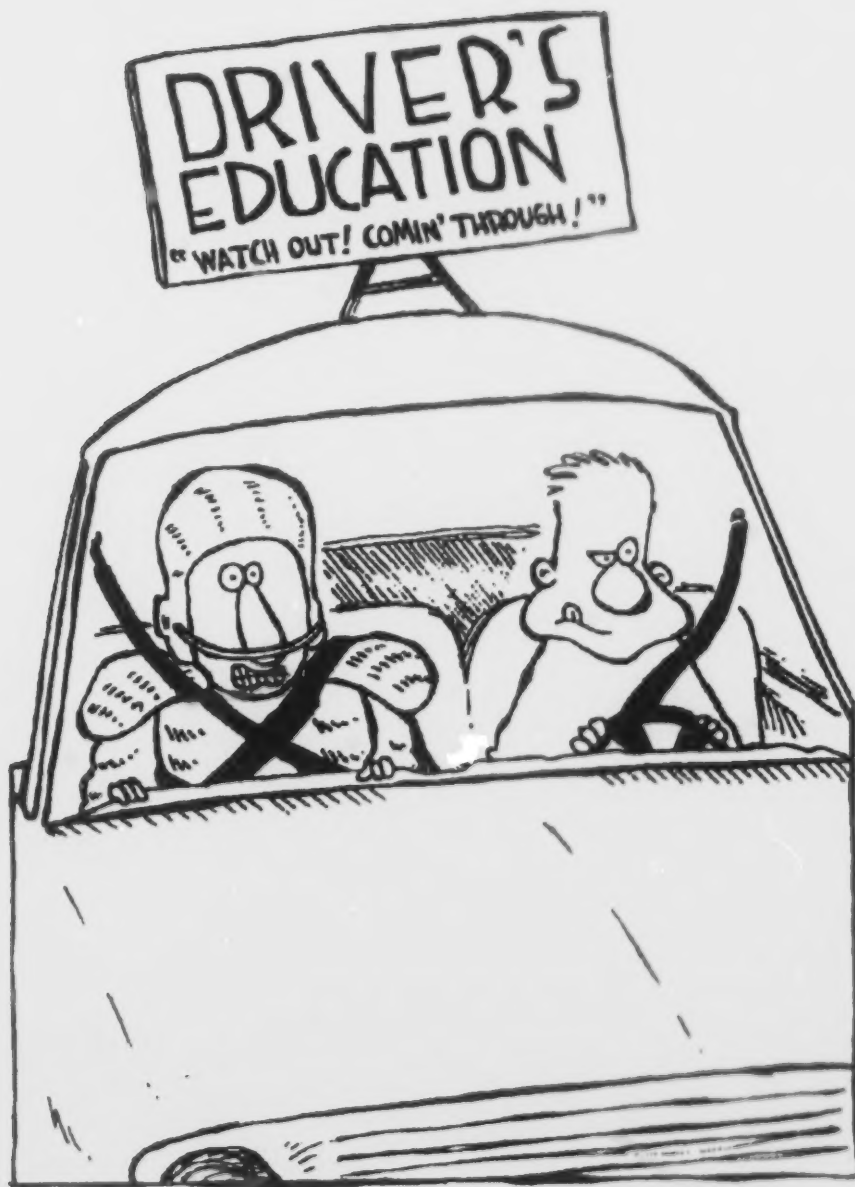
Get together with your children. Talk about stories and learn together. That's the message of this series of books, ***Parents and Children Together***.

You will find here several stories that you and your children can read together and talk about in a relaxed way. Some stories are more appropriate for younger children, some for children in grades three and four. Have fun with them but also use them as a way of guiding your child's thinking.

Before each story, you will be prompted to focus your attention. After the story, review some of the issues in a relaxed conversation. Please feel comfortable in making comments or asking questions when the two of you are reading a story together. Have fun along the way. The stories are performed as radio dramas on the accompanying audiotape. That gives your child a chance to read along with the voices on the tape.

In the second half of this book and on one side of the audio tape there are ideas and guidelines for the interested parent. On the topic of this particular volume you will find hints, practice activities, and books for further reading. If you want to use the tape as a way of preparing for reading with your child or in helping your child study, the tape gives you an opportunity to listen while you are driving or jogging.

For more ideas on any of the topics in this Series, visit ***www.kidscanlearn.com*** or ***<http://eric.indiana.edu>***



Getting Started

During childhood and adulthood we are faced with taking all kinds of tests. In this book we share some ideas on how parents can help their children cope with and learn from tests.

On side B of the tape, we have three read-along stories. We encourage you to listen to these stories and to read them with your children, so that they can participate in the excitement of story reading. Of course, your child can also listen to the stories alone, if you wish.

Before reading each story, talk about the title or things that might happen in the story. Then, after the story is finished, talk about it again. By the way, if in the middle of the story something funny or interesting happens, it's O.K. to stop the tape and discuss the event, or ask your child questions such as "Why do helium balloons float and air balloons don't?" or "Have you ever seen a prairie? What is it like?" These questions make your conversation about the story more meaningful and more valuable.

Part I

Read-along Stories



The Burglar Alarm Case

by Ann Devendorf

Things to Do *before* Reading the Story

This story is about a person who did not understand the things that were happening to her. Talk about times in your own life when you "jumped to a conclusion" about something before thinking about what was really going on, and then found out the truth later. As you read, see if Rita's experience was anything like your own.

It was a hot summer night, and the chirp of crickets was rapid. Inez's dog Paladin panted on the floor of the I.Q. Detective Agency Office.

"We had no detective business today," said Quentella to Inez. "All we did was go to town with Rita and buy a bouquet of balloons for her mother's birthday and take them to her office."

"Yes," said Inez, "that didn't take any brainwork."

Quentella looked out of the office door. "The street lights just came on," she said, "and here comes Rita down the street."

"Help!" called Rita. "Help!"

Paladin stopped panting and jumped to his feet.

"What is it? What's wrong?" called Quentella.



"The burglar alarm system at my house sounded," said Rita, leaning against the door jamb and gasping for breath. "It means there are burglars in my mother's office. The alarm is set to go off at the house and the police station."

"Where is your mother?" asked Inez.

"Not at the office," said Rita. "She's visiting friends. Come on! Bring Paladin! Let's go!"

"What kind of an alarm is it?" asked Inez.

"Infra-red," said Rita. "When someone crosses the invisible beams, the alarm goes off. This time, the alarm shows there must be many burglars in the office because the beams have been crossed several times."

"I see," said Inez, frowning as she thought.

"Come on!" cried Rita. "Are you afraid to go?"



"No," said Inez, "I am not afraid, but I don't think there are any burglars."

"WHAT?" said Rita.

"All that's there is a bunch of helium balloons," said Inez.

Rita frowned. "I know there are balloons there. I bought them!"

"The balloons are losing their helium. As they lose helium, they move and bounce across the office, crossing the light beams."

Rita slumped in relief and sank to the doorstep. "That's probably it," she said. "I've blown up a lot of balloons and let them go. The air escaping makes them fly around."



"It's fun to do that," said Quentella.

"Yes," agreed Inez, "but let's go and meet the police."



When they got to the office, they met the policemen, went into the office, and switched on the light. They saw the colorful balloons floating and bouncing lazily around the office.

“Woof!” said Paladin, backing out the door.

“He’s tangled with balloons before,” said Inez, “and he doesn’t like them.”

“Some burglars,” said one of the policemen.

“No need to take them into the station and book them,” said Quentella, laughing.

“I’ll take them home and lock them up,” said Rita with a grin.

Things to Do *after* Reading the Story

You probably have had or seen balloons filled with helium. Talk about why these balloons are able to float instead of falling to the ground like balloons filled with air. Think of other things that might have triggered Rita’s burglar alarm besides the balloons that were slowly leaking their helium.



The Lunch Box

by Marilyn Kratz

Things to Do *before* Reading the Story

Think of some of the special things you have taken to school. How did you feel when you had something that none of the other students had? Talk about your favorite objects, like toys, books, or clothing, and about why they are special to you.

"I'm ready, Grandpa," said Peter, but he didn't move from the washstand.

Grandpa put his hands on Peter's shoulders. "Your ma and pa often talked about this day—your first day of school," he said. "They wanted you to be an educated man, maybe a lawyer or a doctor."

Peter looked down. "I would rather stay home and learn to be a farmer like you."

Grandpa sighed. "I'm not much of an example for you, lad."

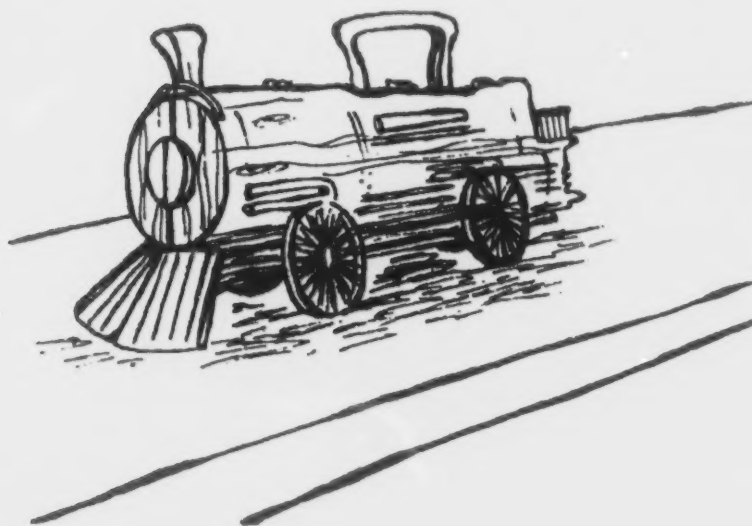
"It's not your fault," Peter spoke up quickly. "We just happened to settle here in dry time. You're a good farmer—a good carver, too."

"Carving is only for pleasure," said Grandpa, looking out the door of the small sod house at the parched prairie beyond. "If we don't get a better crop next year, we won't make it through the winter. It'll be hard enough this year."

"I could get a job in the settlement instead of going to school," said Peter.

"Now, I don't want to hear such nonsense," said Grandpa. He went to the cupboard and took something out of it. "I made this for you."

Peter gasped. "Grandpa! It's beautiful!"



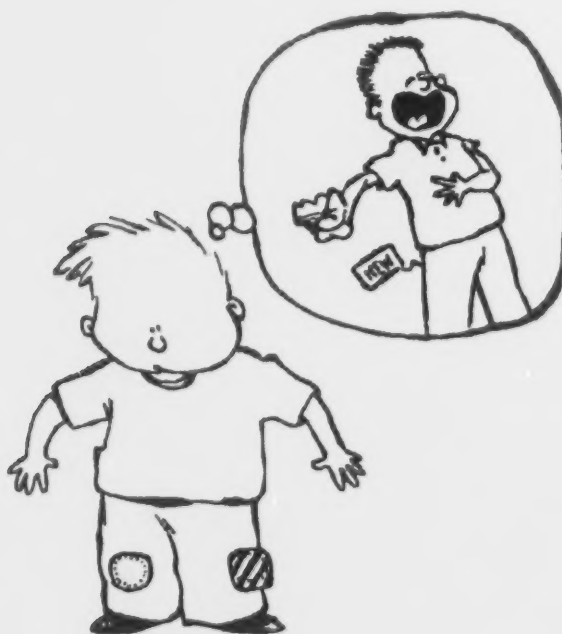
Grandpa had carved Peter a lunch box which looked like a train engine. Every detail was perfect, from the cowcatcher at the front to the engineer's cabin at the rear. The wheels even turned.

"There's honey bread inside," said Grandpa, grinning at the surprised look on Peter's face.

"It's wonderful, Grandpa. Thank you," said Peter.

"Well, it won't do to be tardy the first day," said Grandpa. And, for the first time, he extended his hand to Peter instead of giving him a hug and kiss. "Have a good day, Peter."

Peter felt a queer tightness in his stomach as he shook Grandpa's hand. Then he took a deep breath and stepped outside. As Peter walked toward the settlement, he tried to think of excuses to turn back. He began to worry. Would there be a desk for him? Would the bigger boys laugh at the patches on his pants?





Peter's steps slowed as he approached the schoolhouse, and he stopped to watch the children play.

A boy about his size ran up to him. "Want to play 'pump-pump-pull-away' with us?" he asked.

Peter just stood there, wishing his feet didn't feel so heavy. The boy looked at him a moment, then rejoined the game. Peter was relieved to hear the school bell ring. He went in with the others.

The children placed their lunches on a shelf along the back wall. Most of the children had brought their lunches in shiny tin pails. A few had theirs tied in cloths. Not one had a carved lunch box like Peter's. Suddenly, Peter felt embarrassed about his. He slid it way back on the shelf where it wouldn't show.

The teacher rapped on her desk with a ruler.

"Good morning, boys and girls," she said.
"I'm Miss Swenson. Our first task will be to plan
our seating arrangement. All who are in the third
reader, please sit at the back of the room."



Most of the big boys and girls moved back, two
children sharing each desk. Miss Swenson seated
those in the second reader in front of them.

"Now, those in the beginning reader will sit
up front," said Miss Swenson.

The smaller children scrambled to find seats.
Then only Peter was left standing.

"What reader are you in?" asked Miss Swenson.

"I don't have a reader," Peter said. He felt his ears turn red.

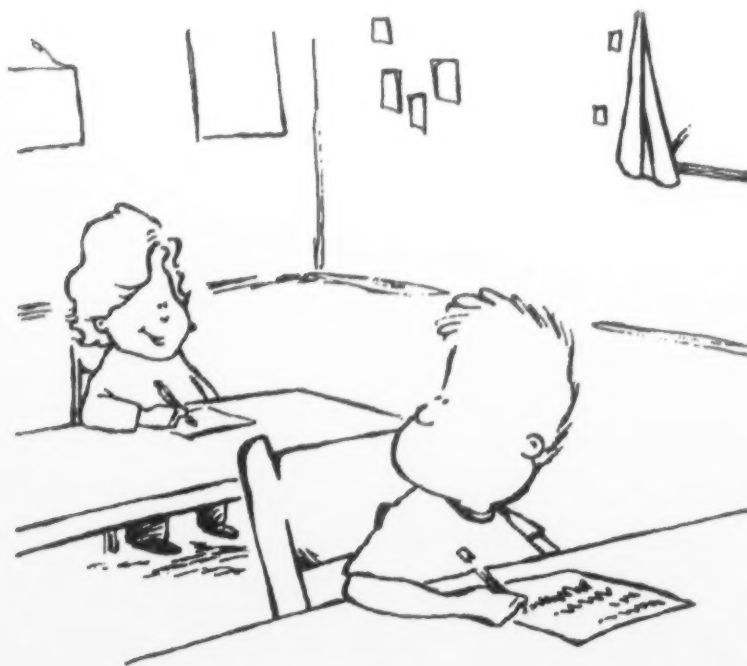
"You may use this one," said Miss Swenson, handing him a beginning reader. "There's only one seat left at the front." She indicated a desk already occupied by a little girl. "You may share that desk with Molly."

Peter heard some snickers as he took his seat. He didn't return Molly's friendly smile.



Peter listened carefully as Miss Swenson assigned the lesson. He copied the letters exactly as she wrote them, and he quickly learned their names and sounds.

"Very good, Peter," said Miss Swenson. "You'll soon be in the second reader."



Peter glanced back. Jonathan, the boy who had invited him to play, grinned at him. Peter hoped he would be able to share a desk with him soon.

The morning passed quickly and pleasantly for Peter. Then Miss Swenson announced, "Lunch time."

Suddenly, Peter felt embarrassed again as he remembered his beautifully carved lunch box.

"Shall we sit together to eat lunch?" Jonathan asked Peter after they had taken their lunches off the shelf.



Peter hesitated. Then he followed Jonathan to his desk, carrying his fancy lunch box under his arm. As soon as he set it on Jonathan's desk, his new friend exclaimed, "What's that?"

"My lunch box," Peter said, hunching down in the seat, afraid that Jonathan would make fun of it. "Where did you get it?" asked Jonathan.

"My grandpa made it."

"It's really nice!" said Jonathan. "May I touch it?"

"Yes," said Peter, wishing Jonathan wouldn't talk so loudly.

"Bob!" Jonathan called to his older brother.
"Come look at this."

Several big boys crowded around Jonathan's desk. Peter wished more than ever that he had stayed home.

"Do the wheels really turn?" asked Bob.

"Has your grandpa made any others?" asked another boy.

"Would he make one for me?" asked another.



Miss Swenson came to see what was causing all the excitement. She examined the carved lunch box.

"Your grandfather is a talented carver," she said. "Do you think he would like to make some for my father to sell in his general store?"



"I don't know," Peter said, trying to think. He knew Grandpa loved to carve. Now that the harvest was in, he had spare time. And the extra money would help get them through the winter. "I'll ask him," Peter said.

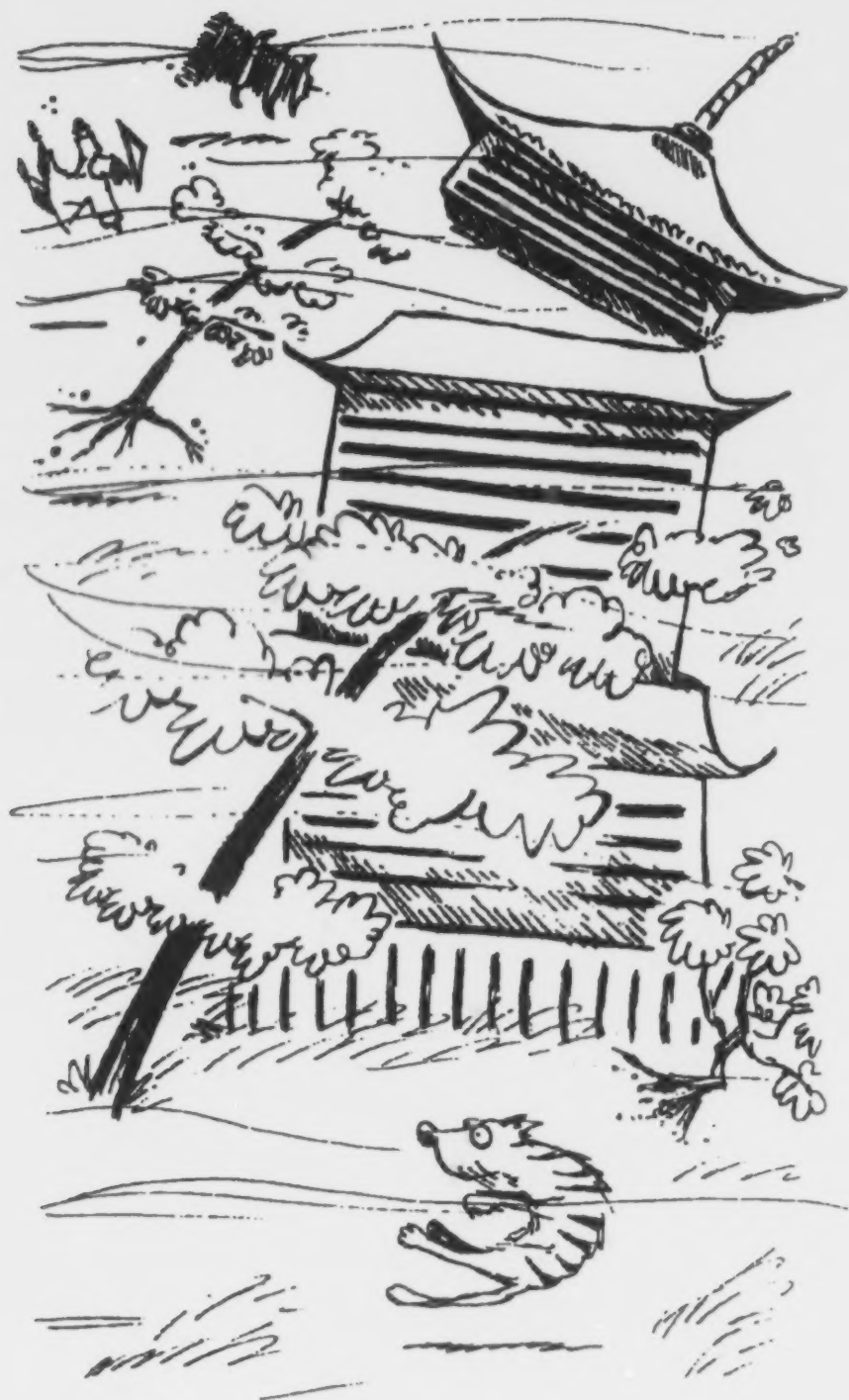
When the others returned to their desks, Jonathan said, "I would like to meet your grandpa some time."



Peter grinned as he took the honey bread from his lunch box. "I'm going to be just like him," he said. "And he's going to be proud of me when I tell him that I like going to school."

Things to Do *after* Reading the Story

Peter felt afraid on his first day of school. How did you feel when you first went to school? Talk about times when you were worried or afraid about doing something. Then talk about how you went ahead and did them anyway, and how it felt to be brave.



The Girl Who Brought Down the Wind

by Constance Veatch Toney

Things to Do *before* Reading the Story

The wind is a powerful force in nature. That is why people in other cultures often think of it as a god or goddess. Talk about words like "twister" that describe the wind and its powerful effects.

One Spring long ago, the wind roared down from his western palace to play with the earth. It was his favorite game. But that day, for some reason, the wind was angry.

Instead of sailing gently through the trees, he ripped them from the ground and flung them about. Instead of whistling merrily through the wind chimes, he tore off roofs, flattened temples, and scattered the newly planted rice shoots.

The people were terrified and called out fearful curses against the wind. This angered the wind even more.



"I will show them!" he howled. "When I have finished here, I will stay in my palace. Let them see just how much they need me." The wind pulled his dark cloak of clouds about him and stormed back to his palace. And there he stayed.

The people in Cherry Blossom's province gave thanks when they saw the wind departing. For days afterward they cleaned, gathered, chopped, and rebuilt. Cherry Blossom helped her father repair their little house. She went with her mother to search for rice seedlings and fruit trees to replant. She watched over her baby brother and thought about the wind and all he had done.

As weeks passed, the people noticed something strange. While they rebuilt their houses, no gentle breeze came to cool their sweating brows. When they replanted their rice fields, no playful winds rippled the water.

"Why is it so hot, Father?" Cherry Blossom asked one day.

"The wind has gone elsewhere," her father replied, wiping his forehead.

"Where is the wind?" she asked her mother.

"I fear we drove it away with our curses," her mother said with a wave of her fan.

"How can we bring back the wind?" Cherry Blossom asked.

"Perhaps Wind Singer can tell us," her father answered. The people gathered around the old man called Wind Singer. He had more wrinkles than a dried plum, and his hair hung down like cobwebs. He was very wise.



"Sing down the wind for us," the people begged.

"I have called the wind for many years," he said. "I will try again." Wind Singer's voice sailed out into the air like a thin note from a bamboo flute. It drifted along the ground and then fell silent.

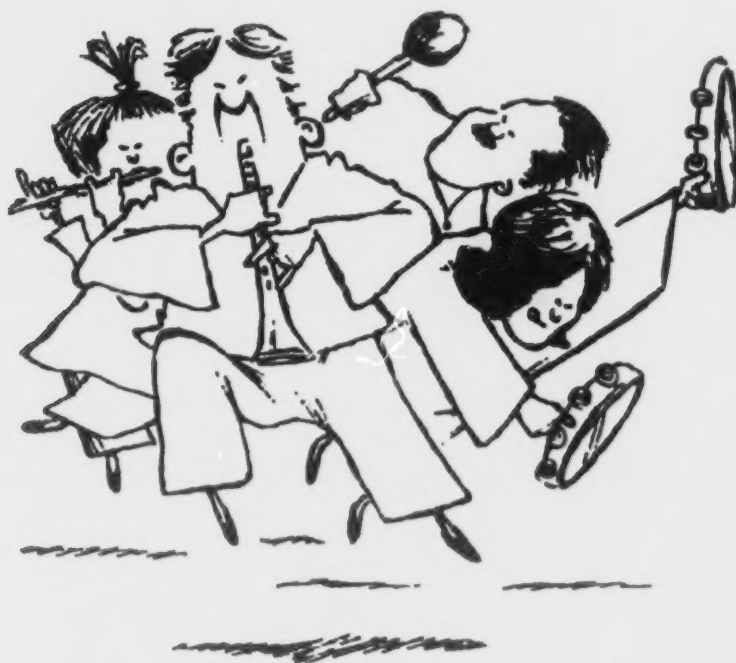


The people sighed and waited for the first breath of wind. Nothing happened.

"The wind is very angry with us," the old man said. "I do not think he will return until we apologize."

"But he hurt us and ruined our houses!" one man cried.

"Nevertheless," Wind Singer cautioned, "the wind is like a spoiled child who must be always entertained. We must coax him back."



So the people tried many things. Some went to the temple and beat upon gongs and cymbals. Others blew silver flutes and whistles. The wind listened but sat unmoved in his palace. Great bonfires burned in the night. The people hoped the wind might see the flames and come to play with them. He watched the stars instead.

Cherry Blossom saw all these things and thought about them. Remembering Wind Singer's words, she went to her father. "If the wind is like a child, perhaps we should make him a toy to play with," she said.

Her father smiled and shook his head. "What can a girl know of these things?" he asked. But he told his neighbor who told others. The people laughed at Cherry Blossom and her idea, but Wind Singer sat and thought.

The days grew hot. No wind blew in rain clouds, so the rice fields slowly dried, and the young seedlings withered. The trees drooped, and the birds could not fly. The wind chimes in every window were silent. A great, hot hush settled over the province.



At last, Wind Singer came to Cherry Blossom's house. "Make a toy that will bring down the wind for us," he said.

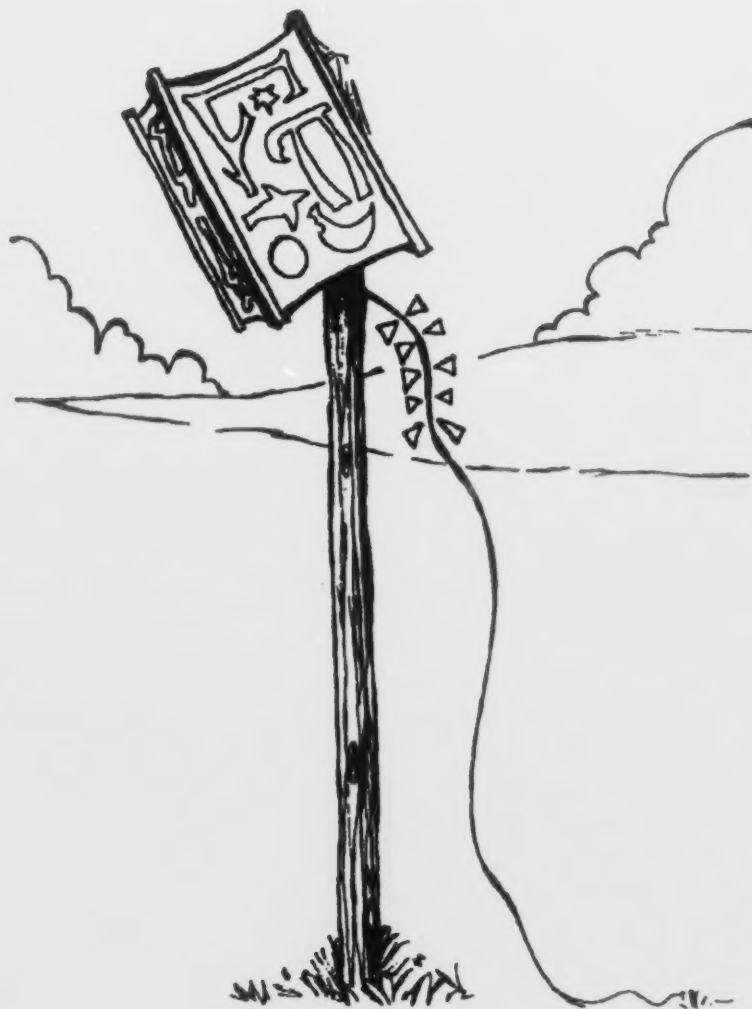


Cherry Blossom took paper and carefully cut out a strange shape. She painted a beautiful design over the paper, using all the colors she thought the wind would enjoy. Then she sewed the paper to thin wooden slats and added a tail of colored cloth. She tied a long string to it and carried the wonderful toy outside and fixed it to a long pole.

The people gathered about Cherry Blossom and her strange creation. She ignored their snickering and watched the tail.

Was it moving ever so slightly?

From his western palace, the wind was surveying Cherry Blossom's province when he saw the brightly painted thing on the pole. Silently, he sailed out to look at it. Gently he puffed at its tail. Why, it was only cloth! He could easily blow it any way he wished. First to the left, then to the right. It swished like a cat's tail. The wind chuckled.



Next the wind pressed against the beautiful toy. It crackled and shifted easily on the pole. Why, it's only paper! he thought. How often had he tossed paper up into the sky and chased it for miles? But this paper was different. It was beautiful and delightfully shaped. It would be much more fun to lift this pretty scrap up into the sky and play with it.

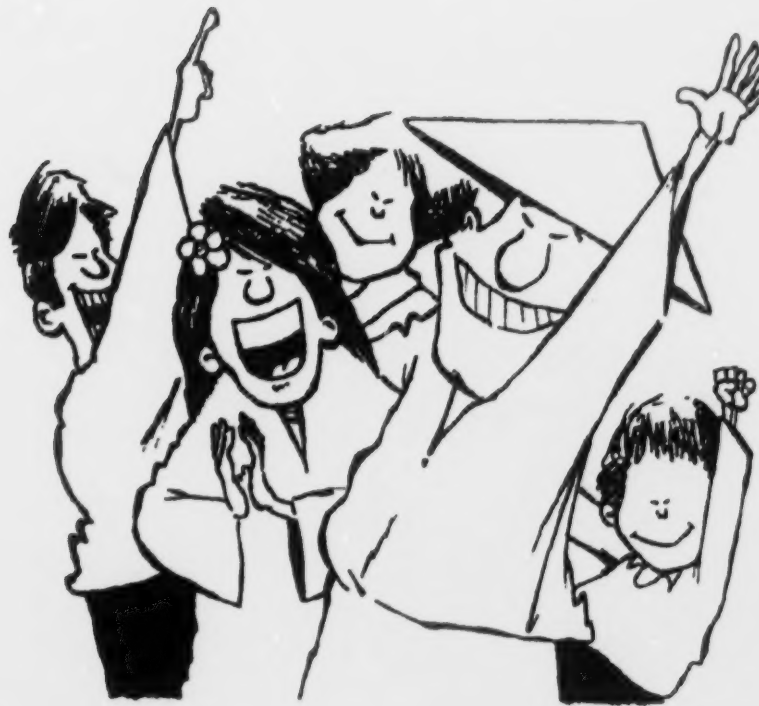
Softly at first, then with stronger gusts, the wind lifted his new toy up off the pole and carried it above the tree tops. At just the right moment, Cherry Blossom leaned forward and caught the string she had tied to the paper. The people held their breath.



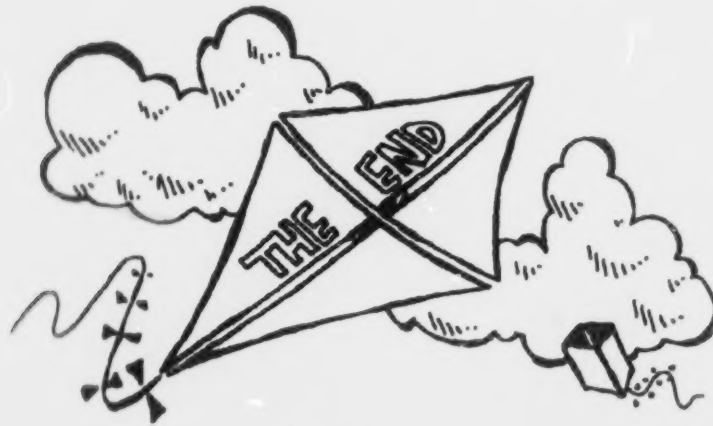
Suddenly, all about them, the trees sprang to new life, their leaves clapping in the breeze. Wind chimes sang from every window, and the birds rose up on eager wings to dance with the wind.

The people cheered and laughed. "Cherry Blossom!" they chanted. "The girl who brought down the wind!"

Cherry Blossom only smiled and held tightly to the string, while high above her the wind tugged and played with his pretty new toy.



Ever after, the children in the province made bright paper toys like Cherry Blossom's so that the wind wouldn't forget to come down from his western palace. And even today, in all parts of the world, children still bring down the wind every Spring in the same special way.



Things to Do *after* Reading the Story

Cherry Blossom thought of the wind as if it were a child. How do you think of the wind? Talk about your ideas. Come up with other ways that Cherry Blossom might have "brought down the wind," besides kite flying. For example, she could have used a windmill. Talk about how a windmill works. Describe how a windmill could have brought down the wind from the palace.

**We hope you have had
fun with these stories!**

Part II

Guidelines for
Parents

Everyone Can Do Better on Tests

Passing tests is something we all do almost everyday—in school, on the job, playing sports, or dealing with family problems. Every time someone says “You did it right,” you’ve passed a test. That’s all a test is—a judgment about a particular event or a particular behavior.

Oh, but some tests are worse than others, you say. And that’s right. Those situations that are labeled tests put psychological pressure on us because we know that we’re on the spot. School tests are like that. Starting a job on probation puts pressure on us because other people may know that we are being tested to see if we are fit for that job. Under those conditions, we may build up fears in ourselves and create internal stress that prevents us from doing our best.



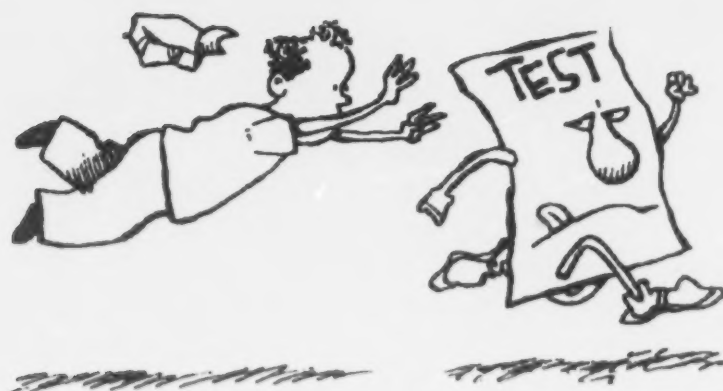
Test Anxiety

Having unusually strong fears about taking tests is called test anxiety. When you have test anxiety, you are experiencing feelings of fear that you can't measure up to certain expectations—and so you don't. If your child suffers from test anxiety, there are a number of things you can do to relieve the fear.

First of all, help your child to recognize that it is a fear, a feeling that slows down her reactions, and that it actually gets in the way of her ability to perform. President Franklin Roosevelt once said to the American people: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." In other words, when we concentrate on failure and on our own embarrassment, we create a barrier to our best perfor-



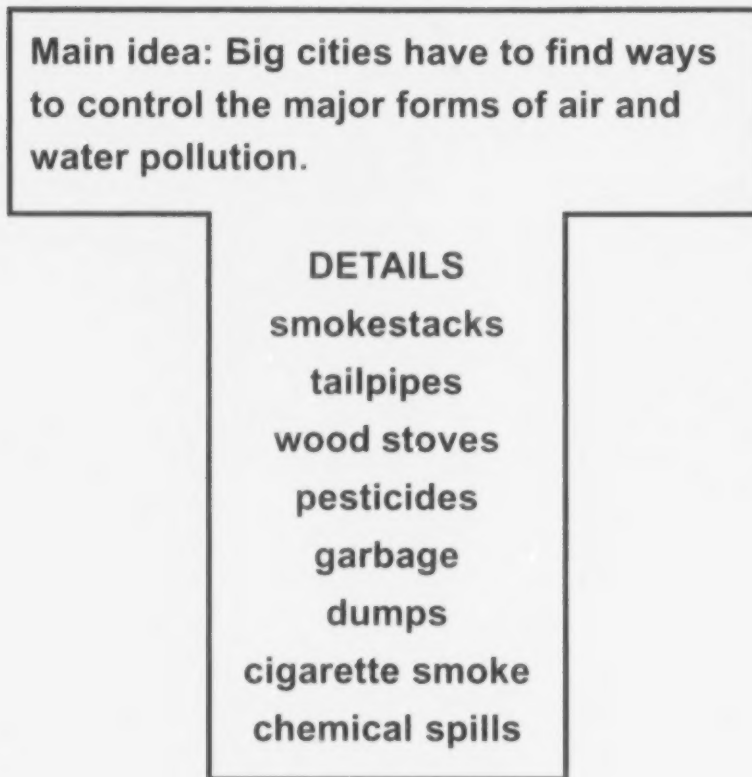
mance. That's the reason that some children freeze up or begin to cry when faced with a test. They have built up so much internal stress that they are immobilized with fear.



If your child is reasonably prepared for a test and knows how to follow the directions, there is no reason why he cannot do an adequate job. Preparation can give your child the confidence to tackle a test because he has built up the knowledge and the skills needed for success. This is where your attitude and your help come into play. You can help him prepare by planning regular reviews of the subject in advance of the test. For example, you can take five minutes every other night to quiz your child on key points.

You can also help by showing your child how to take notes that will remind her of the important facts and ideas covered in the test. Most test topics can be summarized in one sentence. Work with your child to write a summary sentence that gives the theme of the study unit. Learning to write a summary sentence is a good note-taking technique that will help your child to review and to recall important information. Then go through the chapter she is studying and add a list of words that will remind her of the important details that support the theme statement.

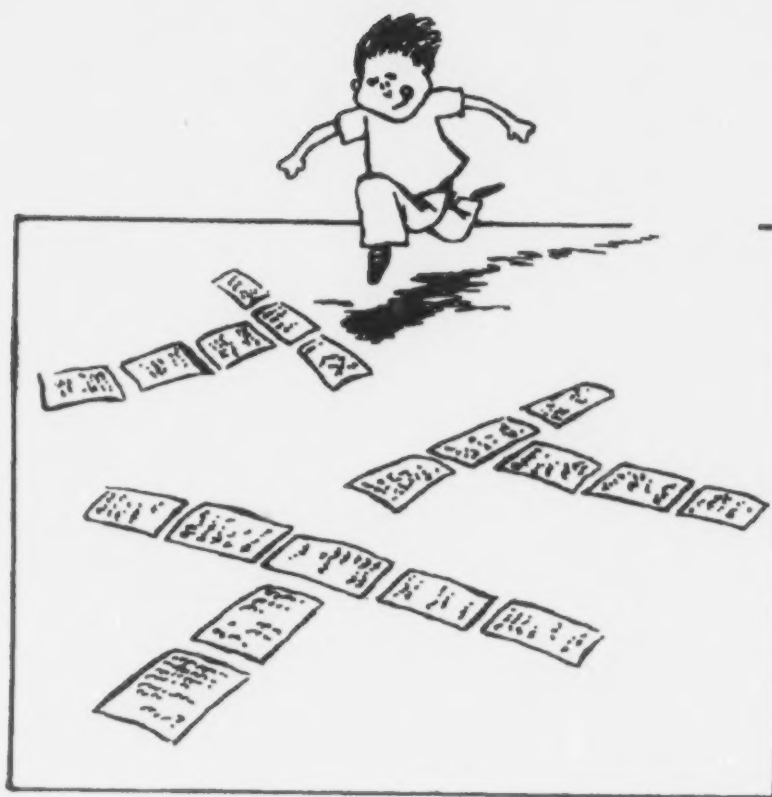
You might think of the letter "T" as a way to visualize these notes, with the main idea statement running across the top of the page and the details extending down the center of the page to form the letter "T." Here is an example from a chapter on pollution.



This "T" note-taking technique is a very simple way for a child to identify and then to review key ideas on many subjects that he studies.

If your child uses this kind of note-taking system, it will be easier for you to help her review. All you need to do is to ask her to explain the main idea. As she talks about it, you can see if she recalls most of the examples that are listed in the details column. If you want to ask further questions to clarify points, you are free to do so. This kind of review can be finished in just a few minutes, and you don't have to spend a lot of time reading the chapter yourself—unless you want to, of course.





The night before the exam, all your child has to do is to run through the “T” notes quickly to see if he has a good grasp of the main ideas. With this kind of preparation for a test, your child will feel more confident and so will you. When you send your child to school with a hug and a confident smile, he is more likely to take a test with the same sense of confidence. As he leaves for school on test days, say: “You have prepared and you will do just fine. I love you because you are working hard. And I’ll love you no matter how you do on the test.”

Practice Tests

Besides the general preparation that we just talked about, it is helpful to practice on tests that are similar to the ones your child will take. Football and basketball teams practice their skills daily, but they also have scrimmage games. These are games that are played among teammates as a way of preparing for the games that count. Why not do the same thing with school tests? Taking practice tests not only gives your child practice on material similar to the real test, but also reduces anxiety during testing at school.

Besides, if you and your child review a practice test together, it gives you a chance to point out how tests are written; it gives your child an opportunity to become a little more "testwise." There are all kinds of tests given in school, but the one thing they have in common is the instructions for taking the test. So the first thing your child should do is pay close attention to the directions. Some children find it helpful to underline the key words in the instructions so they don't forget the specific steps they are to take.





Time may be a factor in some tests. Generally speaking, students should read the test material carefully, but they should also keep moving. If there is a time limit, they need to pace their work so they can complete the test within that limit. If they have an hour to complete the test, they need to ask themselves if they have completed half the work when they have reached the thirty-minute mark. This should be their goal, and they need to keep an eye on the clock to make sure that they are moving at a reasonable pace.

Attitude and Health

By now, it should be clear to you that your child's mental attitude is just as important as being prepared. By following some of the recommendations that we have made, your child should feel more prepared, and that alone will reduce test anxiety. But your attitude also influences how your child feels. Even if you suffered from test anxiety when you were in school, you should try not to pass along that fear to your children.

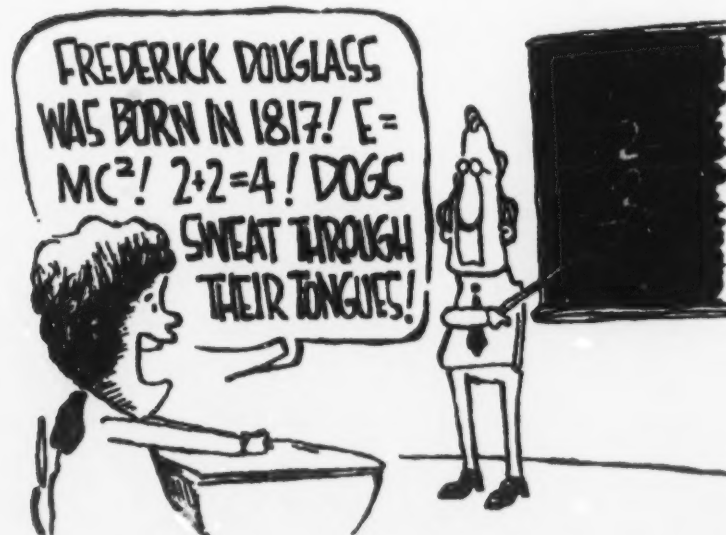
Talk to your children about tests as normal activities in life, as events that well-prepared people take in stride. You won't win all the games you play, and you won't ace every test you take. But you should do the best you can and smile when it is over. The language you use about school tests sets the stage for the attitude that your children will carry with them. Reassure them. Remind them that they have prepared, and that they have had a good night's sleep and a good breakfast so their mind and body can



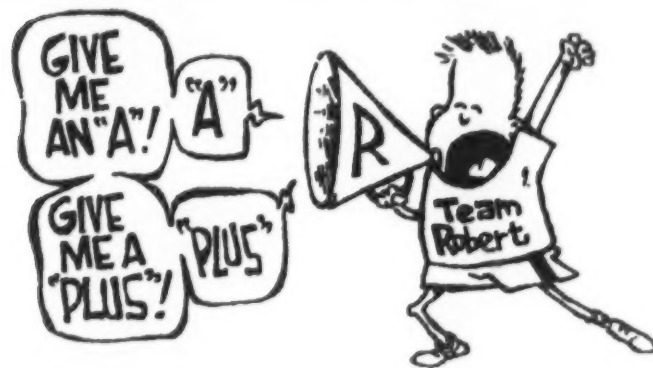
function well. These calm reassurances will let your children know that you are not applying undue pressure; that you expect them to do their best, but you don't expect perfection.

There is no doubt that each of us can learn to do better on the tests that we face in life. Whether in school or on the job, we can improve our performance and therefore our rating if we do the following:

1. Study ahead of time. Good, solid learning takes time and practice. Practice over time gives us a sense of confidence in what we are doing.
2. Focus on the task. Relax and eliminate distractions. Read the directions carefully and follow them methodically. If they are not clear, ask for clarification.
3. Use time wisely. We all operate under time constraints. Work hard on those things that you know well, but keep moving. Remember, a test is meant to take a sample of what a person knows or what a person can do. The teacher doesn't want to know everything that is in the student's mind.



4. Go to bed early. We all perform better when we have adequate rest and food. To be alert and to retain the energy needed for a test, we need a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast to start the day.



5. Be a cheerleader. When there is pressure to perform, we like to have others urging us on. That's why you, as a parent, should send your children to school with a pat on the back or a hug. At the same time, tell your children that they have to keep talking to themselves about the good work that they have done and about the preparation they have made. They have to learn to cheer themselves into doing well on their tests.

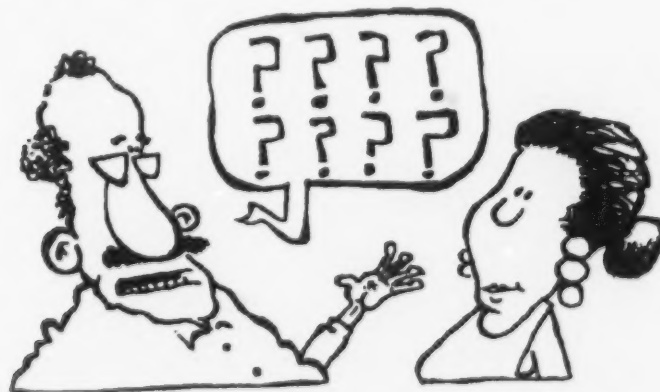
As we have said, tests are a part of life. We should see them as challenges, as opportunities to lift our energies and our spirits, and as ways to grow and to advance. But we also have to keep them in perspective. Tests are merely small samples of what we can do—sometimes a sample that shows a peak performance, sometimes a sample that shows a mediocre performance. No matter, we are still whole persons who have great value.

Parents' Questions about Test Taking

Parents often ask questions concerning children and their education. We will respond to some parents' questions regarding tests and test taking.

Our daughter, who is in kindergarten, has had some learning difficulties. Her teacher has recommended that she be tested by the school psychologist. How can we prepare our daughter for these tests?

Knowing why your child is being tested is an essential first step. Ask questions such as, "Why is our child being tested?" "How will the test results be used?" "What do you expect to learn?" "Will this test determine if she is eligible for special services?"



Be sure that the entire testing experience has been thoroughly explained to you so you can explain it to your daughter. Discuss with your daughter the reasons for the testing, that is, so teachers will know how to help her in school. This test is not for a report card grade.

If at all possible, you should be nearby when your daughter is tested. Reassure her that you will be waiting for her when she finishes the test. Explain how many adults will be there, and tell your daughter their names, if possible.

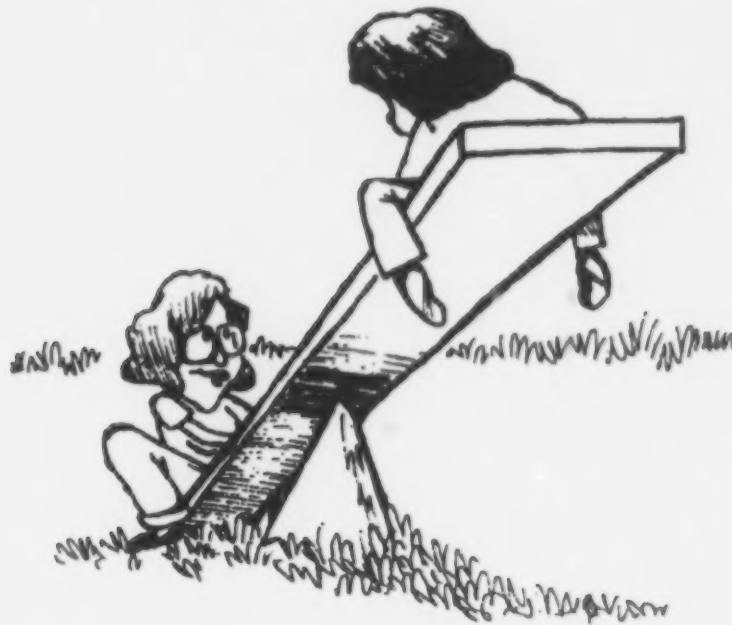
Most children do not have a good sense of time. Wait until the night before the testing is scheduled to discuss it so she doesn't get anxious while waiting to take the test. Most of the testing will seem like playing games to your daughter. For example, she may use building blocks, complete puzzles, string beads, and do a variety of other activities. It might be helpful to describe it just that way—as a series of games so the psychologist can help her in school.





Dress your daughter in clothes that are comfortable. A frilly dress and patent leather shoes are attractive, but will not allow your daughter to have the mobility and comfort needed during the testing. Take along a favorite snack. Children get hungry and hunger pangs can interfere with your child's ability to concentrate. Food can be used after the testing to thank her for her good participation. Favorite toys can also help strange adults break the ice, to initiate conversation, or just to help your child feel more comfortable. Find an old lunch box or bag. Fill it with small toys and ask the psychologist if your daughter can carry it into the testing room.

After the testing is over, make an appointment to discuss the results and what they mean. You might consider a special reward for your daughter immediately following the testing. Lunch at her favorite restaurant, for example, or going to the park to play for awhile. Let your



daughter share her reactions to the testing. Write down her comments. Feel free to discuss these with the staff on your return visit. Some testing procedures require more than one session, so you may be asked to come back again.

The important thing to remember about this kind of special testing is that it requires no preparation by your daughter. She will not get a grade. And after the test, you should have your own questions ready for the psychologist so you can understand what the results mean for you and for your child.

Our son becomes nervous and worried around report card time. Although he works hard in school, he only gets average grades and is always concerned when grades come out. What can we do to help him at report card time?

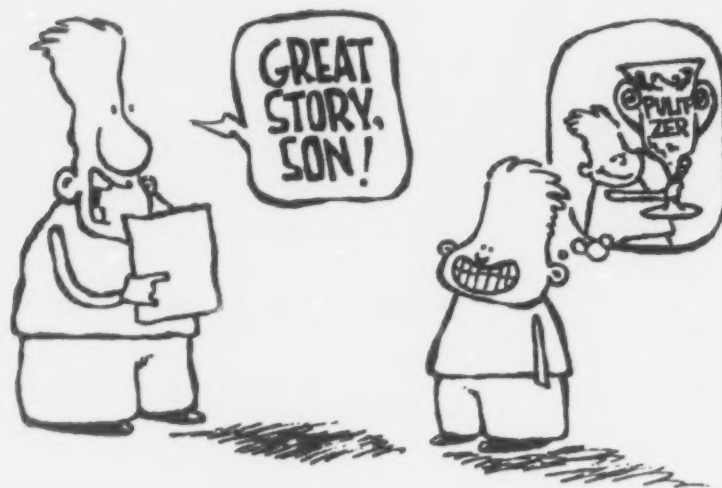
Report card time can be an anxious time for parents and children. Your son may worry that he is not living up to your expectations. You may feel you are not doing your part to help. Why don't you approach report cards in a positive way? Here are some hints on how to do that.

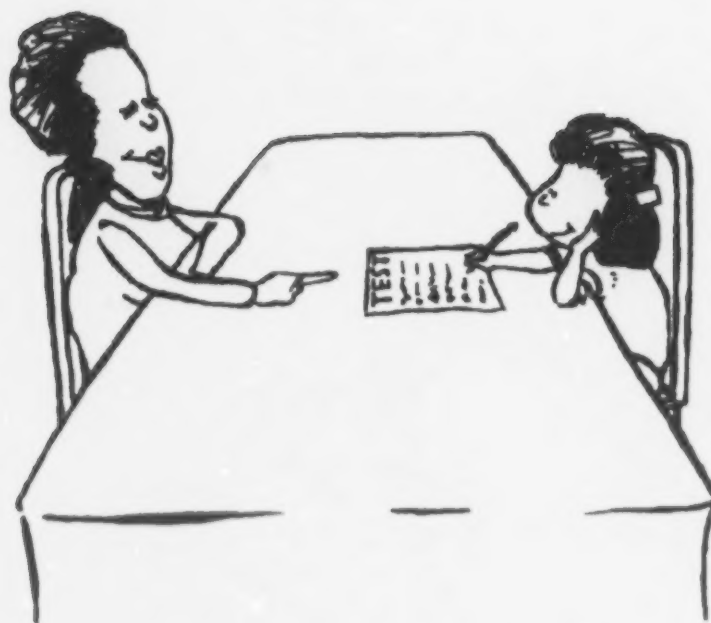
First, prepare for report cards. Just before report cards are due, ask your child, "What do you think your report card will tell us?" Let your son tell you if he expects any problems. Even when children do well in school, they may be nervous about a certain grade. Just talking about it may reduce some anxiety.



Second, keep the report card in perspective. The report card is just one small measure of your son's ability. There have been other report cards in the past. And there will be more in the future. A child who gets all "A's" still has more to learn. A child with lower grades still has plenty of strengths. Remind your son of that.

Third, think positively. Use the report card as a chance to take positive action. Find something to praise your son about—his attendance, his attitude, or maybe his improvement in writing stories. Then talk about an area where he can grow. Ask him how he thinks you can help. You may want to set a regular time each day to review vocabulary or spelling words. You may agree to turn off the TV during the study hour to remind him it is time to study. Or, you may decide to talk together with his teacher about ways he can grow as a student.





Is it worth the time to go over tests my daughter brings home from school?

You and your daughter can learn a lot from a test. A test can show where she had difficulty, and perhaps she can explain why. This is especially important in subjects that build on prior learning. For example, children who cannot multiply and divide will not be able to understand fractions.

It helps to talk about how well your daughter used her time during the test. Did she finish? Did she check her work? Did her guessing help? Just talking about ways to manage tests may build confidence for the next time.

Activities for Fun and Learning

The following activities help children learn while having fun. Select one for you and your child to do together.

Count on It

- * Look at a magazine with your child and ask her to count some of the different things you both see. For example: cookies on a page, flowers in a bouquet, letters in a word, faces in a crowd.



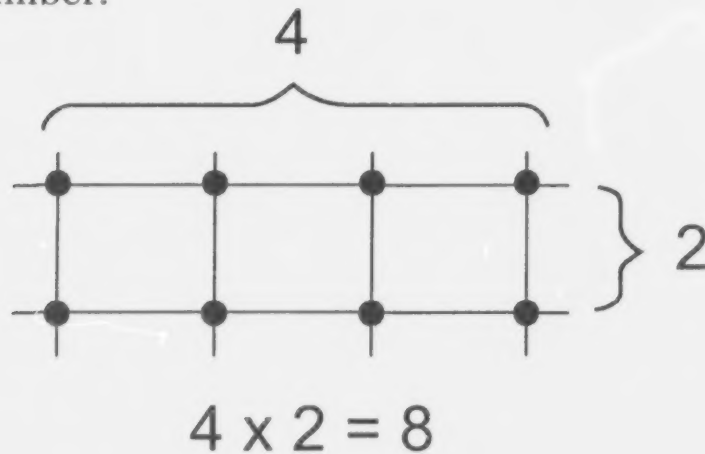
Shape Designs

- * Help your child improve his hand coordination and control by drawing a shape on a piece of paper for him to surround with larger repetitions of your original. Use a different color for each repetition and a pretty design will be the result.



Dots

- * Play a game with your child that will help her learn multiplication. Take turns selecting two numbers. Draw vertical lines equal to the first number, on top of those, draw horizontal lines equal to the second number. Draw dots where the lines intersect. The number of dots are equal to the first number multiplied by the second number.



The End

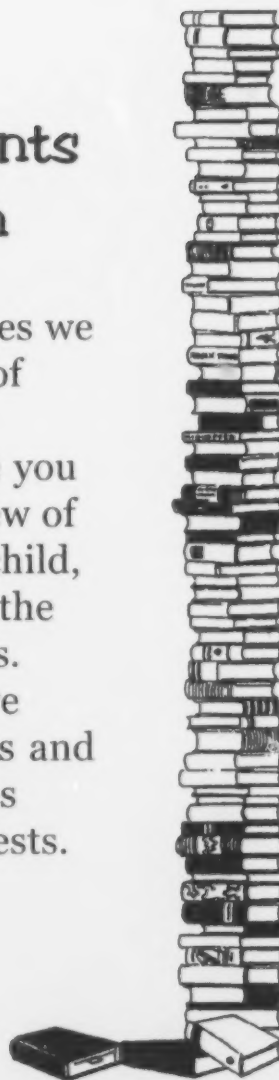
- * Ask your child to make up an ending to this sentence. "On my way to school this morning I heard a soft tinkling sound and suddenly... ." Then encourage him to tell or write a story that stems from his sentence.

These activities are taken from *Games for Learning*, by Peggy Kaye (The Noonday Press).



Books for Parents and Children

On the following pages we have put together lists of books for parents and children. We encourage you to take time to read a few of these books with your child, and talk about some of the characters in the stories. Several of the books give practical test-taking tips and some of them are stories about children taking tests.



Books for Parents

The Grade Booster Guide for Kids by Roy Kern and Richard Smith. Describes easy-to-follow plans for better grades and test scores. Includes strategies for evaluating study habits, recommendations for test preparation, and tips on taking tests. Discusses schedules, physical health, note taking, eating, sleeping, and how to get help from classmates, teachers, and parents.

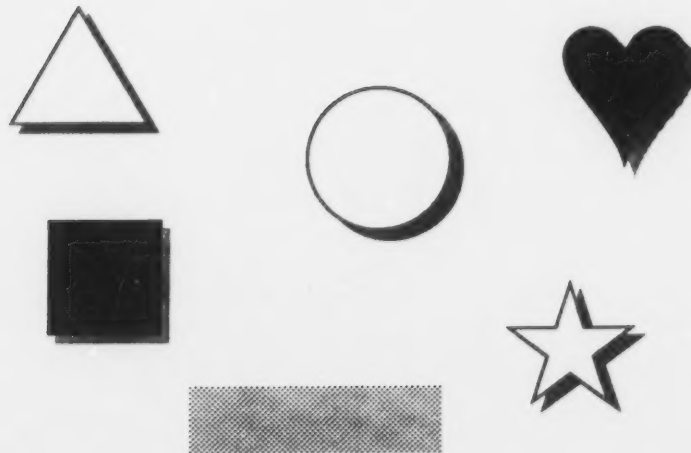
Test without Trauma: How to Overcome Test Anxiety and Score Higher on Every Test by Bette Erwin and Elza Teresa Dinwiddie. Provides an introduction to testing, measurement, and evaluation. Examines the possible causes of test anxiety and suggests ways to deal with and reduce test-related tension. Also gives advice on how to cope with test results.

Dr. Gruber's Essential Guide to Test Taking for Kids by Gary R. Gruber. Introduces parents to standardized tests and general test-taking skills. Outlines test-taking strategies for vocabulary, sentence completion, reading comprehension, writing, analogies, math problems, quantitative comparison, and rules and shortcuts. Notes ways to help children reduce test anxiety.

Books to Read Together

Ages 4-6

Shapes by Gwenda Turner. Presents triangles, squares, circles, rectangles, hearts, and stars as they appear in everyday life. Illustrates each figure with a cut-out of the shape.



Abacadabra to Zigzag by Nancy Lecourt.

This alphabet book displays funny and unique words and phrases found in spoken English with explanations for each. Includes words such as "dillydally," "itsy bitsy," "rolypoly," and "upsy daisy."

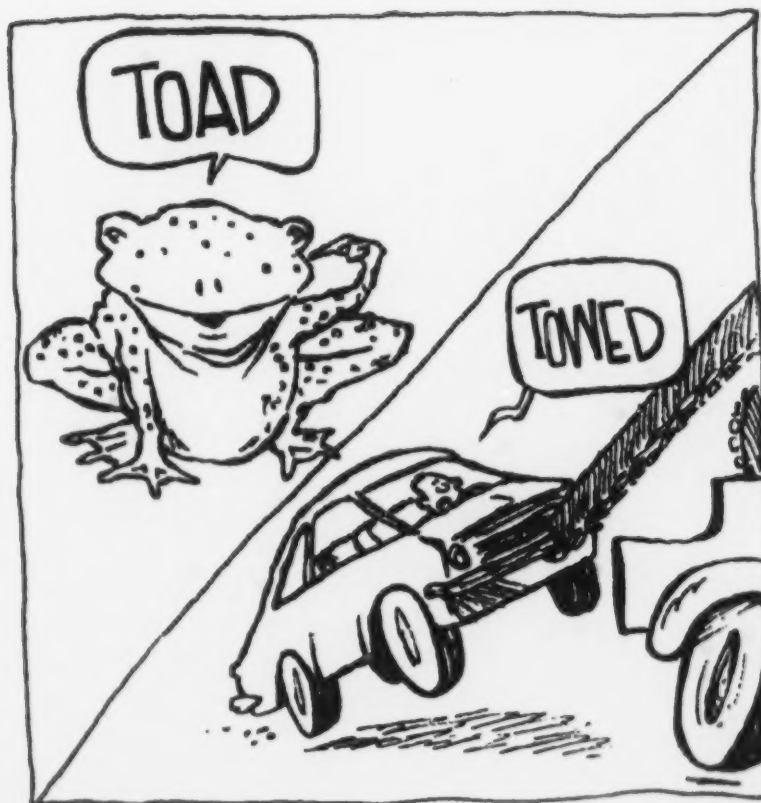
Hard to be Six by Arnold Adoff. A six-year-old boy wants to be older so he can do all of the things his ten-year-old sister can do. He learns from his grandma to be patient and "take time slow, make love count, and pass love on."

Ages 6-8

Help Is on the Way for: Tests by Marilyn Berry. Defines what a test is and why tests are important. Outlines ways to prepare and to study for a test, and gives tips for taking different types of tests.

Family Secrets by Susan Shreve. Includes a short story on cheating in which a boy cheats on a math test and thinks he is a criminal. Then he must face his parents and teacher. After confessing and retaking the test, he no longer feels guilty and unhappy.

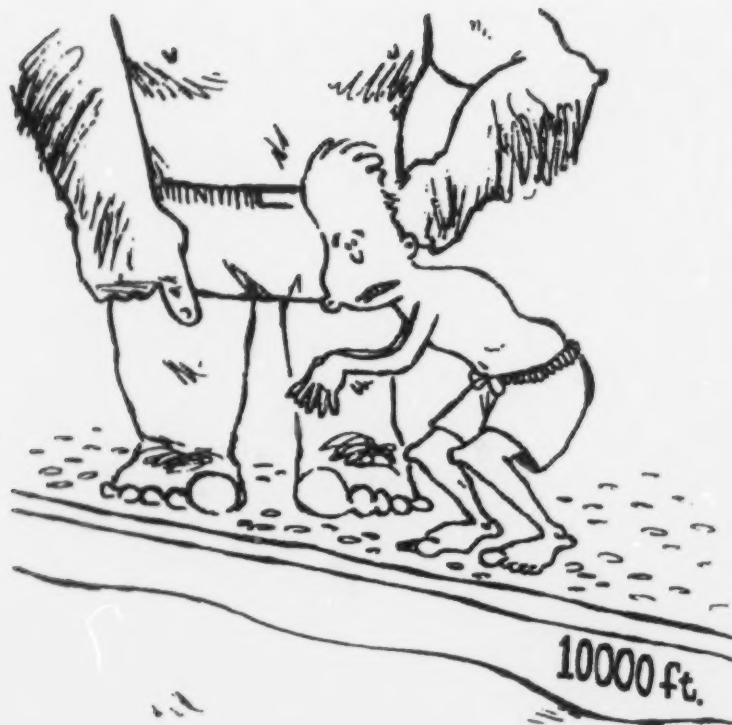




Hey, Hay! A Wagonful of Funny Homonym Riddles by Marvin Terban. Presents words that sound the same, but are spelled differently and have different meanings in an entertaining format. Offers a great way to study for a test on homonyms and have fun.

Ages 8-10

Test-Taking Strategies by Judi Kesselman-Turkel and Franklynn Peterson. Explains different kinds of tests and the best strategies to use for taking each. Covers a variety of test formats and subjects.



The Testing of Charlie Hammelman by Jerome Brooks. Charlie does not want to take a swimming test and seeks the advice of a psychiatrist. Shows some of the tests Charlie must deal with as he matures.

Sixth Grade Can Really Kill You by Barthe DeClements. Helen is afraid she will never get out of sixth grade because of her reading problems. Describes some of the difficulties kids face in school.

Books for Your Children to Read by Themselves

Ages 4-6

Country Animals by Lucy Cousins. A board book containing drawings of rural wildlife. The name for each animal is also given.



More First Words/My Birthday Party by Margaret Miller. Uses photographs and simple text to show the different things one may see or do at a birthday party.

I See by Rachel Isadora. Large print and easy to read vocabulary display things a young child might see in a typical day.

Ages 6-8

See You in Second Grade! by Miriam Cohen.

While this group of first-graders is enjoying their end-of-the-year picnic, they think about the great year they have had. After a few moments to remember, they are anxious to begin second grade the following year.



The True Francine by Marc Brown. Francine and Muffy are best friends, until Muffy cheats on a math test and Mr. Ratburn blames Francine. Finally Muffy decides to be a loyal friend and tell the truth.

What to Do When Your Mom or Dad Says, "Get Good Grades!" by Joy Wilt Berry (Childrens Press). Defines the purpose of tests and grades. Presents practical skills that will enable students to get the most out of tests and grades.

Ages 8-10

How to Be School Smart: Secrets of Successful Schoolwork by Elizabeth James and Carol Barkin. Describes successful organization of study space and time, different learning styles, ways to handle homework, and tips for taking tests.

How to Sharpen Your Study Skills by Sigmund Kalina. Gives practical advice on taking notes and tests. Includes tips to help students develop a better memory, use their library, and do homework.



Josh: A Boy with Dyslexia by Caroline Janover.

Shows how important testing for learning differences can be in a child's education.

Presents a young boy with dyslexia and the problems he has in school and everyday life.

Also includes information on dyslexia and organizations that deal with learning differences.

Magazines

Also ask your librarian for the following magazines for children:

Cricket

Current Health I

Highlights for Children

Faces

Odyssey

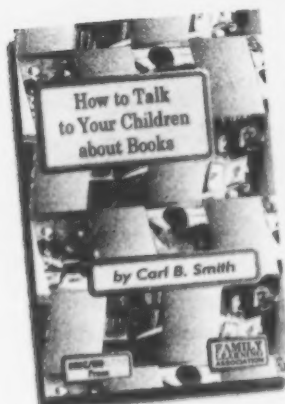
Scholastic News

Time for Kids

YES Magazine

Your Big Backyard

**If you found this book useful,
please try these other helpful books !**

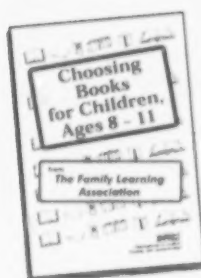
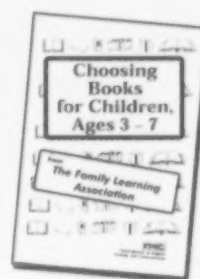


**How to Talk to Your Children
about Books** by Carl B. Smith

Start a conversation that will last a lifetime. This book teaches you five easy techniques to prompt book discussions, guidelines for selecting books, how to make it a two-way exchange, plus motivation, values, and making it fun!

Choosing Books for Children, Ages 3 to 7

Use this resource to appeal to a variety of interests in your kindergarten to primary-age children. Filled with great tips for keeping book conversations going, this book pinpoints a vast array of age-appropriate reading materials.

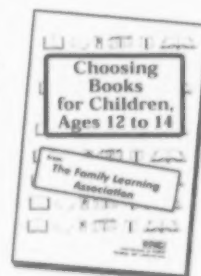


Choosing Books for Children, Ages 8 to 11

Quick summaries of a huge collection of titles will make it easy to provide good reading for your pre-teens. Top-notch authors, relevant themes, and sensitive issues make this a good companion at the library or bookstore.

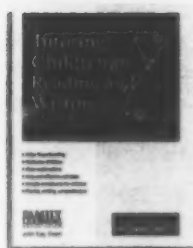
Choosing Books for Children, Ages 12 to 14

Let literature open up discussion about some of the difficult issues your teen is experiencing. Includes a special section on communicating about books through writing and journaling.



For information about these and other helpful books
The Family Learning Association
3925 Hagan Street, Suite 101, Bloomington, Indiana 47401
1.800.759.4723 www.kidscanlearn.com

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE



Tutoring Children in Reading and Writing

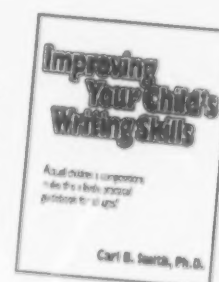
Book 1: Kindergarten
Book 2: Grades 1-2



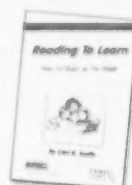
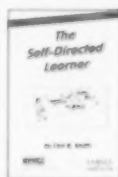
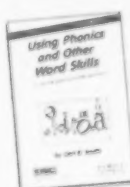
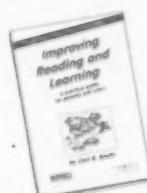
These guidebooks use a hands-on approach to helping children improve essential skills. Using easy and effective activities, they focus on the building blocks of reading and writing with sample worksheets that focus on letter recognition, spelling, phonics, and comprehension.

Improving Your Child's Writing Skills

Using actual children's compositions, this fun guidebook takes kids through the entire process of writing, from Pre-Writing and Drafting to Revising and Proof-reading. The practical work sheets form a framework to hone the skills of any young writer.



HELPING CHILDREN TO LEARN SERIES



Improving Reading and Learning

Reading to Learn

Phonics and Other Word Skills

Creating Life-Long Readers

The Self-Directed Learner

For information about these and other helpful books

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Editor: Michael Shermis
Editorial Assistant: Melinda McClain
Writers: Carl B. Smith, Marge Simic, and Melinda McClain
Editorial Staff: Eleanor Macfarlane and Deborah Edwards
Original Production: Lauren Bongiani
Cartoonist: Dave Coverly
Story Selection Committee: Kathy Burdick, Kim Faurot, Hester
Hemmling, Maggie Chase, and Brian Sturm

Audio Producer: Michael Shermis

Studio Engineer: Bob Estrin

Voices in Order of Appearance:

Side A: Joy Kahn and Dave Mac

Side B: Instructions by Joy Kahn

"The Burglar Alarm Case"

Narrator:	Sonja Rasmussen
Quentela:	Vicki Platz
Inez:	LeAnne Millholland
Rita:	Aimee Frye
Policeman:	Brian Sturm

"The Lunch Box"

Narrator:	Sonja Rasmussen
Peter:	Andy Cambridge
Grandpa:	Rick Sakasitz
Jonathan:	Dave Coverly
Miss Swenson:	Vicki Platz
Bob:	Brian Sturm

"The Girl Who Brought Down the Wind"

Narrator:	Sonja Rasmussen
Wind:	Dave Mac
Cherry Blossom:	Vicki Platz
Father:	Brian Sturm
Mother:	Joy Kahn
Wind Singer:	Rick Sakasitz

Studio: Music House, 1101 N. Hartstrait Rd., Bloomington, IN 47401

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